

Policy 5.1.2 Child Care

POLICY PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a City role in child care. It also provides staff with direction about which child care opportunities to pursue.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Child Care Legislation

The Sunnyvale City Council is concerned with the affordability, availability and quality of child care available to its residents and employees of its business community. It is recognized that addressing this need will require a partnership among Federal government, state government, the business community, local government and non-profit agencies. However, it is Council's belief that the federal and state governments have a primary role in assuring that the child care needs of its populace are addressed. Federal and state governments should develop comprehensive plans to deliver and fund those services and provide appropriate incentives to encourage employers to provide child care opportunities for their employees.

This policy establishes that the City Council does not view itself in a primary role in assuring child care needs are met; rather, that is viewed as an appropriate role for federal and state governments. The policy statement calls for legislation to specific child care objectives and issues.

City/School Cooperative Efforts

The City will support ongoing efforts of local school districts to increase the availability of child care. Priorities to be addressed are to maintain the inventory of existing child care slots available at school facilities (whether opened or closed); to develop additional child care slots at school sites, particularly for those in Sunnyvale where no site now exists; explore with the districts potential ways to expand the child development and state pre-school programs, especially targeted to at-risk youth; to explore establishing additional extended care programs at school sites where the needs are most acute; and to encourage the training of child care personnel.

The implications of this policy are: 1) the City will make reference to the need to maintain facilities for child care uses in appropriate elements and sub-elements of the General Plan as they are amended or adopted (Land Use, Open Space, Socio-Economic); 2) the City will work with the school districts regarding child care, including ways to protect the inventory of sites; 3) the City will explore with the school districts means of developing and funding additional child care at school sites including expansion of child care by installing portables; 4) the City will jointly study with Sunnyvale School District the possibility of expanding the child development and state pre-school program (some funding from an outside source may be needed to assist with start-up costs for the program); 5) the City will explore ways of establishing and funding additional extended care programs at school sites; and 6) the City will work with high schools and junior colleges to develop child care training programs.

Support for Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)

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The City will support activities designed to increase the availability and quality of family child care homes in Sunnyvale. Priorities include developing more infant care slots; improving the quality of home care; and increasing the numbers of licensed providers. The City will coordinate with the licensing agency to assist in facilitating the licensing procedure.

Implications of this policy are: 1) the City will participate in and perhaps lead efforts to recruit and support FCCHs; 2) the City will explore the possibility of providing program services to home care providers through the Recreation Division and Library; 3) the City will promote programs to encourage unlicensed homes to become licensed; 4) the City will coordinate with other agencies such as community colleges, in order to develop an educational/training program for FCCHs; and 5) the City will work with the county to facilitate licensing procedures.

Child Care Centers

The City will support the development of additional child care centers and improving the quality of their services in Sunnyvale. Priorities will be to provide support services for child care center programs (similar to FCCHs) and to review the possibility of expanding child care uses in churches.

The implication of this policy is that it will: 1) explore ways to provide support services to day care centers, possibly in conjunction with some services to be provided to FCCHs; and 2) explore the potential of developing more day care uses in churches.

Support for Child Care in the Private Sector

Priority will be given to facilitate efforts to establish child care centers in industrial areas if employers will provide significant financial support for the development of the center(s).

The implications of this policy is that the City would continue in its current child care policy role regarding industry. The City will cooperate with other agencies in their efforts to increase employer participation in child care. Staff will actively review the feasibility of establishing one or more child care centers in industrial areas of the City. However, the City would not develop the center itself, but would act in a coordinating role with other businesses and child care agencies. Some funding from an outside source, i.e. state grants, may be necessary in order to make this feasible. This policy would also be consistent with Council efforts to develop child care facilities in developments, should Council adopt that option.

Subsidized Child Care

As a general policy, the City will not directly subsidize child care through general fund money. Subsidized child care will be provided as needed to low-income individuals who participate in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training with WIA funds in accordance with WIA guidelines.

This policy means that the City will not directly subsidize child care services with its general fund, but does not rule out that possibility if other funding sources are available

Other implications of this policy are that the City will be committed to allocating a portion of WIA funds to assist WIA clients with children while they are in WIA-sponsored child care programs. This provides flexibility in how care is provided, but clearly establishes the priority. The City will also advocate for state grants to assist with the funding. The City does not,

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however, view its role to use general funds to fund subsidized care beyond the funding provided with WIA funds and related state programs.

Resource and Referral

The City will support efforts to improve the accessibility, availability and quality of child care resource and referral services to Sunnyvale residents. Priorities include establishing a resource and referral office in or near Sunnyvale; improving the capability of resource and referral services to develop additional child care slots; and improving the quality of referral services available.

Implications of this policy are that: 1) the City will advocate for the establishment of an office in or near Sunnyvale; 2) the City will review alternatives and funding sources available in order to upgrade the quality of service; and 3) the Council may be asked at a future time to provide incentives, such as office space, to establish a site or enhance services.

Funding Policies

City general funds expended for child care should be leveraged to increase the supply and quality of child care, especially infant care and extended care. City general funds shall not be used to provide or subsidize the provision of child care programs on an on-going basis except where an integral part of City programming, such as the Parks and Recreation fee-supported after school PALS program. City general funds may be used for Council initiated child care studies and coordination amongst various provider agencies and groups. City general funds may be considered in circumstances where funds can be effective in achieving policy goals through one-time capital/project funding and matching funds for support activities. Funding should be sought out through grants and other sources to allow for the implementation of City child care policies. Non-general funds may be used to support child care programs and activities consistent with the childcare policy such as the NOVA child care program or grants or intergovernmental funds the City may receive specifically for the provision of child care. The City's financial commitment to such direct programs ceases with non-general fund sources. Child care agencies/providers that receive City funds or indirect subsidies (such as below-market rents) are strongly encouraged to pay competitive compensation to their child care employees.

The implications of this policy are that the City will not spend City general funds for direct child care services, whether provided by another agency or by the City. However, this limitation does not apply to services that are provided through ongoing City programs that are supported by other General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Statements, such as services provided by the Library and Recreation Division. It may also fund capital/projects or provide matching funds for activities that leverage available child care resources through support activities. General funds may be used to support a child care coordinator position. The City may also use funds from other sources, such as grant funds, private contributions or funds raised through mitigation fees from development for projects or programs that increase the quantity and quality of child care available in the community. Staff will actively pursue other sources of funding. However, if such funds terminate, on-going support for the program will not be continued with general funds. The City will review the compensation policies of child care agencies that receive direct or indirect subsidies from the City as an indicator of the quality of services provided.

Intergovernmental Cooperation.

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The City will coordinate with local government agencies to develop cooperative child care policies and programs and identify ways in which agencies can jointly enhance child care services.

The implication of this policy is that the City will establish cooperative relations with other local government agencies to facilitate the development and provision of child care services. Priority will be given to the development of cooperative agreements with agencies which provide services that cross jurisdictions (i.e. school districts may offer services in more than one city). The City may develop programs jointly with schools and adjacent cities to provide services to the entire student body at a given school which serves more than one city (such as extended care programs). The City will participate in joint efforts that facilitate cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

(Adopted: RTC 80-192 (3/25/1980); Amended: [No RTC] (3/25/1980), [No RTC] (3/15/1988) [No RTC] (1/31/1989); (Amended, Policy Update Project 7/2005))

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager